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January 2, 2013

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *JEF*  
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT (VIVITROL)**

On December 13, 2011, your Board approved to extend the use of medication assisted treatment, known as Vivitrol, for clients with alcohol and opiate addictions. Your Board additionally instructed the Director of the Department of Public Health (DPH) to report back in 12 months on the efficacy of Vivitrol and recommendations for its expanded use in high-risk populations.

**Efficacy of Vivitrol**

In late February 2012, the Los Angeles County Evaluation System (LACES) began a one-year Vivitrol Phase II project to examine the impact on clients' use of alcohol and opiate drugs, urge to use, and side effects after their final Vivitrol dose. Phase II data will continue to be collected through February 2013. Based on preliminary data, clients' urge to drink/use went from a clinically significant score on the Urge to Drink Scale to a score within the range indicative of low risk of relapse. Additionally, the number of days a client used decreased from an average of 4.8 days in the month previous to the first Vivitrol injection to 1.2 days at follow-up (30 to 60 days after the final Vivitrol injection). Lastly, side effects decreased over time, stabilizing 12 weeks after the first injection, affecting 20 to 30 percent of clients.

Follow-up assessments with clients are conducted at 30 and 60 days after the last Vivitrol dose is provided; therefore, the time frame for completed follow-ups is between 120 days to almost one year for those who receive six doses or more. Since the study started in late February, many have not yet completed both follow-up interviews. To date, less than half of the clients who have received Vivitrol injections have completed follow-up assessments. Although the findings are preliminary, they suggest that Vivitrol effectively reduces use and the urge to use, even after cessation of treatment. Further analysis will be conducted upon completion of all data collection.

The one-year study will conclude in February 2013. Follow-up activities will take place from March to April 2013. DPH will prepare a report back to your Board with the results of the study in May 2013.

### **Recommendations for Expansion**

DPH continues to collaborate with other organizations to increase the availability of Vivitrol in Los Angeles County. On March 1, 2012, DPH launched the Adult Drug Court Enhancement grant project to expand current Drug Court treatment services to include Vivitrol. This grant is for a period of three years and is targeted to serve approximately 27 participants per year. During year one of the project, DPH provided Vivitrol treatment services to 21 participants. To date, there have been five offenders who have successfully completed the Vivitrol treatment component and remain in the drug court treatment project.

Most of the remaining 16 participants are still participating, but have not yet completed the Vivitrol component of the drug court program. Additionally, DPH provided training on Vivitrol to all Adult Drug Court Treatment programs and court team members (i.e. judges, public defenders).

In 2012, DPH partnered with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Sheriff's Department in developing a Vivitrol project for AB 109 Co-Occurring Disorders (COD) Postrelease Supervised Persons (PSPs). Under this program, PSPs with opioid dependence are screened for eligibility for Vivitrol services. The pre-release Vivitrol injection for the PSP population is being provided by DMH at County jails and is funded by the Sheriff's Department. Post-release, all subsequent outpatient injections will be provided at 12 DMH and DPH contracted COD outpatient treatment sites and funded 50 percent by DMH and 50 percent by DPH.

DPH has also partnered with the Sheriff's Department to implement in-custody treatment within the Maximizing Education Reaching Individual Transformation (MERIT) Program. The project will provide direct services to inmates, utilize co-located staff at the Twin Towers Correctional Facility's Community Transition Unit (CTU) to assist with referral and placement, and if appropriate, screen inmates scheduled for release for Vivitrol eligibility and referral for first in-custody injection and subsequent post-release injections at one of the 12 DMH or DPH contracted COD sites.

The following efforts are also underway to enhance Vivitrol accessibility:

- The California Department of Health Care Services is continuing to work with Alkermes, Inc., the manufacturer of Vivitrol, to address issues of medication cost, treatment, and service reimbursement for Medi-Cal and Medi-Cal Managed Care programs;
- DPH contracted providers are now able to purchase Vivitrol at the 340B discounted rate that is established for Federally Qualified Health Centers and qualified hospitals. The discounted rate is expected to better enable providers to incorporate the use of Vivitrol in their treatment programs; and

- DPH and DMH are co-chairing the Drug Medi-Cal Reform Workgroup to make recommendations and reform Drug Medi-Cal formularies to allow a broader range of treatment options, including Vivitrol, for Los Angeles County residents.

DPH will continue to explore more opportunities to expand the use of Vivitrol in high-risk populations. As mentioned previously, we will report back to your Board with results on the Vivitrol study in June 2013. In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

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c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors